

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Mill Creek Historic District (Boundary Increase)

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number roughly bounded by Schuylkill River, Mill Creek, Righter's Mill, Rose Glen and Monk's Roads

N/A not for
publication

city, town Gladwyne (Lower Merion Township)

N/A vicinity

state PA code PA county Montgomery code 091 zip code 19035

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination
☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of
Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property
☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally
☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Brent Glass, Exec. Director

July 1, 1996

Signature of certifying official

Date

PA Historical and Museum Commission

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional
comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined eligible for the
National Register ☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined not eligible for the
National Register
☐ removed from the National Register
☐ other (explain):

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

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Additional Zip Codes

19072
19096
19041

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

☒ private
☒ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

☐ building(s)
☒ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>84</u>	<u>24</u> buildings
<u>16</u>	<u> </u> sites
<u>27</u>	<u>1</u> structures
<u>5</u>	<u> </u> objects
<u>132</u>	<u>25</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: DOMESTIC

Sub: single dwelling, multiple dwelling, secondary structure, village site

INDUSTRY

manufacturing facility

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: DOMESTIC

Sub: single dwelling, secondary structure

COMMERCE/TRADE

office building

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

COLONIAL

Other: Vernacular Mill Buildings

Tudor Revival

Federal

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE

roof Asphalt

walls Granite

other wood

Narrative Description (X See continuation sheets.)

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Description

Lower Merion Township's Mill Creek Historic District Boundary Increase is a wooded enclave composed of the Mill Creek Valley and surrounding hills. The boundary increase enlarges the size of the original Mill Creek Historic District (N.R. 1980) by 550 acres. The boundary increase contains eighteenth and nineteenth century vernacular water power mill buildings, mill workers' housing, and mill ruins. The mills are primarily constructed in rubble stone; mill workers' housing is constructed mainly of stone or wood framing and weather board. The boundary increase also contains large, architecturally significant estate residences, constructed in the early twentieth century by wealthy Philadelphians, and fashionable single dwellings constructed throughout the twentieth century. Builders mainly used stone, brick, and exposed wooden beams to construct these estate homes and single dwellings. The boundary increase is located in Lower Merion Township, about ten miles from center city Philadelphia, near the village of Gladwyne (N.R. 1980), and within suburban Philadelphia's "Main Line." Mill Creek, the backbone of the boundary increase, flows down a heavily wooded ravine, under nineteenth century stone bridges, over paved fords, and through eighteenth and early nineteenth century mill settlements before finally meeting the Schuylkill River. The area of the proposed Mill Creek Historic Boundary is located between the existing Mill Creek Historic District and the Schuylkill River. Surrounding the district and its boundary increase are the river to the north, the heavily developed Ardmore and Bryn Mawr areas to the south, the Gladwyne area to the west, and other highly developed residential areas to the east. Within the boundary increase, mill buildings and mill workers' housing are located along the banks of the creek and in the ravines of its important tributaries. Large estate homes are mainly located on the hilltops, and the fashionable twentieth century homes are located throughout the boundary increase. The most visible elements which contribute to the boundary increase's historic character are the mill complexes, including Walover/Jones Mill, the Egbert Mill, and Nippes Barker Mill. The boundary increase contains 157 resources. There are 132 contributing resources and 25 noncontributing resources. There are 84 buildings, 27 structures, 16 sites and 5 objects which are all contributing, and 24 buildings, and 1 structure which are all noncontributing. Almost all of the buildings are residences. Every site is a mill ruin or associated with a mill. The previously designated Mill Creek Historic District is centered on a small hamlet of primarily eighteenth and nineteenth century buildings located at the intersection of Old Gulph Road and the western most portion of Mill Creek Road and covers approximately 24 acres. The boundary increase consists of land which abuts the existing district to the southeast, and is located approximately one quarter mile to the east of the Gladwyne Historic District. Given the boundary increase's high ratio of contributing resources over noncontributing resources and the large quantity of open space, the boundary increase maintains a high degree of historic, visual, and architectural integrity.

The most prevalent resources along the creek are the stone buildings belonging to the vernacular building tradition of the area's English/Welsh Quaker settlers. These well-built buildings were constructed of roughly laid, often coursed, field stone. They are predominantly 2-1/2 stories in height. The stone work of the exterior walls was often stuccoed. Wood shingled gabled roofs were the rule and usually were augmented with dormers. There is considerable diversity in plan even among residential resources. Single family homes, similar in plan to many Pennsylvania farm houses, housed mill owners and managers, while cottages and multiple family dwellings lodged mill workers and their families. Many of these buildings also show the influence of the Federal style. One example of this type of architecture is a mill worker's house found on Old Gulph Road in the southern part of the boundary increase. The house (12), is a two story, field stone building with an end gabled roof and rear addition. It was once a twin mill worker's house, having two entrances. There are two gable wall dormers on the front facade as well. The mills were, for the most part, of vernacular design. They were two to three stories tall and usually constructed of fieldstone. Initially, water wheels provided power but as the nineteenth century progressed several were retro-fitted with turbines and steam power. Mills were located very close to one another on the creek. Consequently, mill dams were rarely

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located more than a short distance above the mill. Races channelled water from the small ponds to the mills. A long portion of surviving earthwork mill race can be found west of the Bicking Mill site (41). The water was then channelled back into Mill Creek to be reused by the mills located further down stream.

Mill Complexes and Associated Mill Resources

Overview: Water Power for Mills

The mill complexes and other mill resources are the main focus of the boundary increase. They were dispersed along the length of Mill Creek as it falls approximately 250 feet between the point of its origin south west of the boundary increase and the Schuylkill River. Mill Creek had plenty of fall to turn mill wheels, and there were very few days during the year when there was not a constant flow of water. John Roberts I set up the first mill where there was a natural 10-12 foot head or fall of water. Many of the subsequent mills on the creek were set up in an area where there were either no natural fall, or falls not large enough to turn a wheel. In these areas, the millers did one of several things: they either built a dam and artificially raised the level of the creek, or they used a flume to carry the water to the top of their wheel. An 1877 map shows dams at Hagy, Chadwick and Robeson mills. Dams could be earthen work, stone or concrete. Water was transported to the mill by a race, passed through the mill's wheel or turbine and returned by means of a tail race to the creek. Due to the narrowness of the creek gorge, the mill ponds tended to be small but deep, providing more than sufficient power to the mills. An example of this is the Walover/Jones Mill Complex (16, 19, 21, 22, 23a, 23, 24, and 25). There are no surviving mill ponds along Mill Creek within the historic boundary increase.

Mill Complexes and Contributing Mill Buildings

The boundary increase contains three nearly intact mill complexes: the Walover/Jones Mill complex, the Nippes/Barker Mill complex (45, 45a, 45b), and Egbert Mill complex (53, 53a, 53e and 53f.) There are at least four mill owner's or mill manager's houses: Fairview (40), Robeson (10), Old Gulph House (4), and Righter House (30). Other major mill buildings include mill workers' housing, including several masonry and frame buildings on Rose Glen Road (54, 55, 57, 58, 59, 61, 62, 63 and 64.) Overall, there are approximately 19 mill workers' houses throughout the boundary increase, one of which is noncontributing. Finally, the location of seven no longer extant mills and one residential community associated with a mill exist within the boundary increase as sites and have archeological significance.

The Walover/Jones Mill complex (16, 19, 21, 22, 22a, 23, 24 and 25) was a paper mill venture begun by the Roberts family in the middle of the eighteenth century. The mill hamlet is located in a deepening of the valley on Mill Creek Road just east of Crosby Brown Road. At the center of the grouping is the short single span twentieth century concrete bridge (20) over which Mill Creek Road traverses the creek. The focal point of the community is the two-and-a-half story stucco over stone mill (22, Photo 1), located on the south side of the creek just east of the bridge. The building possibly dates as early as 1758 (the beginning of the boundary increase's period of significance) but was remodeled in the mid-nineteenth century and converted to residential use in the early twentieth. The mill has an asphalt shingle end gabled roof with gable and shed dormers. The remnants of the earthen work mill race (22a) are located on the south side of Mill Creek west of the mill building and on the opposite side of Mill Creek Road. A wood frame stable building (21) is located directly opposite the mill building on the other side of Mill Creek Rd. This building is sheathed with board and batten siding.

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The rest of the buildings in the Walover/Jones Mill complex help form a small hamlet and are perched on the hillsides rising above both sides of the creek. The most prominent is Tayr Pont (19), the mill proprietor's house. The house is located in an elevated position on the hillside above the north side of the stream. The oldest portions of the house possibly date to the late seventeenth century. Two additions to the original part of the building have been dated circa 1722, however this has not been substantiated. The building is constructed in separate fieldstone and timber with stone in-fill portions and has been stuccoed for unified appearance. Housing for mill workers was located on the hillside above the mill building itself. A series of three fieldstone tenement houses (23, 24 and 25) are perched on the steep slope. The design of each is highly representative of the region's vernacular building heritage. They are fieldstone buildings. Two of the three are stuccoed while the stone work of the third remains exposed showing prominent stone quoins. They have end gabled shingled roofs with dormers and generally have small frame additions. A larger fourth tenement house (16) is located on the north side of the road just west of the hamlet. This is a four story parged fieldstone bank house with an end gabled roof and a two story rear wood frame addition. A stone and timber barn (80) also originally associated with the complex is located in a shallow ravine located just west of Tayr Pont on Crosby Brown Road. The building has been remodeled into a residence.

Another similar mill complex, the Egbert Mill complex (53, Photo 3), is located just north of Mill Creek along the eastern side of Rose Glen Road. The circa 1840 2-1/2 story parged fieldstone mill is set into a wooded hillside just above a small tributary of the creek. Just north of the mill building is a two story nineteenth century twin mill workers' tenement house (53a). It is constructed of roughly laid fieldstone with a rear frame addition and second story veranda. Both buildings now serve as single residences. The mill and tenement house are separated from the road by a low crenelated nineteenth century stone wall (53g) and a stone lined mill race (53f). Further north on Rose Glen Road is a cohesive row of nine stone and frame mill workers' cottages (54, 55, 58, 59, NC60, 61 [Photo 5], 62, 63 and 64) which line the west side of the roadway. For the most part, these frame buildings have relatively high integrity, although several have undergone changes, including modifications to rear facades and the remodeling of one building to the point that it is no longer contributing (NC60). All of these buildings were constructed circa 1860. As a group these buildings also retain many of their original architectural details, including molded ceramic chimney pots and scrollwork bracketing. An example is the Sturgis Cottage (61), a two story frame house with horizontal wood siding, end gabled roof, a large front porch, and fretwork detailing.

The Nippes/Barker mill complex consists of three buildings and one ruin. The main building, the mill (45, Photo 2), is composed of several blocks. The mass is divided into two halves by a second story bridge which connects a western twelve bay brick section from an eastern stone grouping. The buildings are situated parallel to the creek which flows about fifteen feet below through a wide stone walled channel. To the northwest of the large building is a stone and clapboard tenement house (45a). A roofless two story, three bay ruin site (45b) is situated east of these buildings alongside the stream.

Another prominent building once associated with a mill is Fairview (40, Photo 6), a mill owner's house located on the east side of Conshohocken State Road near its intersection with Mill Creek Road. The oldest part of Fairview was constructed by Jonathan Robeson, a prominent mill owner, probably in 1794. The house was remodeled in the third quarter of the nineteenth century. The stuccoed stone residence is located on a 2.8 acre site where Conshohocken State Road crosses a large stone bridge (52). The large residence, with its nineteenth century mansard roof and impressive two story porches supported by columns, sits on a hill facing southwest over the creek and valley. In the valley below the house are the remains of an early stone spring house (40b). Another small building, a stone changing room (40c), is located next to the stone walled, spring-fed pool (40a), both constructed in 1928. Beside the pool is Mill Creek and a series of stone walls which may once have been part of a mill building located on the site (40d).

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None of the existing mills have been changed or altered to the extent that they can no longer be considered to contribute to the historic character of the boundary increase. Likewise, no noncontributing buildings have heavily impinged on the historic mill complexes and related buildings.

Contributing Structures Associated with Mills

In addition to the many intact resources dating from this industrial period of the boundary increase's history, remnants of dams, races, foundations and several groups of mill ruins line the creek's banks. There are four contributing structures relating to mills in the boundary increase. The Egbert Mill contains a stone-lined mill race (53f) running behind several buildings along Rose Glen Road, then under the road, and to the mill (53). Another structure is the remnants of an iron pipe, race, and dam above the Walover/Jones mill complex (22a). Also at the Walover/Jones complex is a round stone well structure (19b) near Tayr Pont, the mill owner's house.

Contributing Mill Sites

There are thirteen sites in the boundary increase upon which mills once stood or where buildings and structures associated with mills once stood. All sites have the potential to produce archeological findings. These include the S.L. Robeson Mill site (77), the Righters Mill site, c. 1765 (28a), Robeson Paper Mill site, c. 1796 (30a), Humphreys Mill site, c. 1825, rebuilt after fire 1877, and demolished sometime after 1894 (40d), Bicking Mill site, late 1700s (41), Chadwick Mill site, 1836 (79), Hagys Saw and Paper Mill site (48), and a residential community (43) associated with the Nippes/Barker Mill (45). The Hagys Mill dam (48), located just south of the Schuylkill Expressway, is a remnant of a concrete, fieldstone, and earthen dam, approximately 85 feet long and 16 feet at its highest. A site associated with the Nippes/Barker Mill is a series of stone ruins (44) on a hill south west of the mill and a standing ruin adjacent to the present mill building ruin (45b, Photo 21). The Egbert Mill complex contains a group of stone foundations (53e) of possible archeological significance. There is also a stone barn ruin (36a) thought to be associated with the Humphreys Mill site. One other example is the ruins of a large, standing, four part tenement house (41, Photo 7) once associated with the Bicking Mill. Surviving details make evident the vernacular architectural traditions associated with the mill and enables a person to determine the number of housing units the site once contained. The Nippes/Barker residential ruins (43) also contains standing ruins. Resource 60a is the ruins of a fieldstone springhouse.

Twentieth Century Contributing Estate Buildings

The highland areas of the proposed boundary increase are dotted with early twentieth century country estate buildings and structures designed in an eclectic and diverse group of revivalist styles. The resources on the estates are indicative of the transition between the boundary increase's early industrial beginnings and to what became a wealthy suburban enclave. Included are four estates, two of which survive intact, one subdivided but with all primary buildings surviving, and one on which no major buildings remain, yet the land remains as a single parcel.

The Rodman E. Griscom house (also formerly owned by John T. Dorrance Jr.), designed by Edmund B. Gilchrist and built in 1929, is indicative of this period in the area's development. This estate's large "chateausque" French Renaissance Revival style country house (73) is arranged with a collection of attached out buildings around a central courtyard. The fenced complex is located in the midst of a large orchard and largely obscured from the public view.

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Clyfton Wynyates, at 57 Crosby Brown Road (26, 26a), once the main house of the 192 acre James Crosby Brown estate, is located on a commanding bluff above Mill Creek just west of Righter's Mill Road. The steep hillside below is impressively buttressed by a series of large stone retaining walls, which are contributing structures (26b, 26c, 26e). The house, first known as "Dipple," was originally constructed in 1903 for William C. Scott by the firm of Price and McLanahan in an "English" style. The twenty bedroom home was purchased in 1914 by James Crosby Brown and remodeled by the original architects in the Tudor mode to reflect the Brown's English ancestral seat, Clyfton Wynyates. The property is accessed by a high stone arched bridge over a tributary to Mill Creek. The bridge has a crenelated wall and is a contributing structure.

On Old Gulph Road is the 60 acre "Wooded Hill" estate (2, 2a, 2b, 2c, 3, 3a). The main house, circa 1920 (2) is a large two story, rubble masonry, Tudor Revival mansion with a polychrome slate roof surrounded by a stone and stucco wall (2c). The compound includes a two story half timbered Tudor Revival guest house (2a) with a end gabled slate roof, and a two story fieldstone, two bay banked garage (2b) with a pyramidal slate roof. These buildings sit around a cobble stone court yard. The estate is approximately 12 acres and contains, in addition to the contributing resources described above, a masonry mill worker's house (3). The house is a fieldstone, banked, end gabled vernacular residence.

In addition, the center of the boundary increase contains the former estate of Walter C. Pew, heir of the Sun Company founder. The estate was known as Rolling Hill Farms. The main house burned in the mid-1950s. Today, only a caretaker's house survives (56) and some ruins (56c), a stone bridge near the estate's entrance (56b), and a pond (56a). The property was purchased by Lower Merion Township in 1995 to be preserved as open recreational space.

Twentieth Century Residential Resources

Unlike the large estates of the turn of the century, later development within the boundary increase has involved smaller buildings on smaller lots. Philadelphia architect Walter K. Durham, played a pivotal role in the development of the boundary increase between 1933 and 1962. Durham constructed substantial suburban homes on three to twenty acre lots. Durham constructed twelve homes within the boundary increase (one of which is noncontributing) and made modifications to at least a half dozen others. Only two other houses (31, nc18), besides those built on estates, were constructed in the boundary increase's period of significance in the twentieth century (1900-1946). The Maple Hill Road section of the proposed boundary increase, also known as "Castle Hill", is a section of the boundary increase heavily influenced by Durham. The heavily wooded hilltop area was developed by Durham with large Colonial Revival and "English" homes sighted on spacious lots. In 1946, Durham chose to erect his own home (68) on one of the prime lots along the road. This house is exceptional among Durham designs for its exceptional interpretation of the Colonial Revival style. The main block is brick with a wood shingled, end gabled roof. The door has a pedimented architrave. Two smaller sections are connected on the northeast end of the house to give it a telescoping effect. A pair of substantial brick chimneys dominate the profile of the building. Arguably, the most grand Durham-designed residence on Maple Hill Road is the former William C. Elliot residence (71, Photo 9). This Georgian Revival style building, erected in 1936, is sighted on a 31 acre lot located at the southern terminus of the Maple Hill Road. The fieldstone house sits atop a large terraced lawn on the hillside above Mill Creek. The end gabled house has a substantial wood cornice and other elaborate cornice and architrave woodwork on both the front and rear of the house.

Within the boundary increase Durham's work can also be found on Mill Creek Road, Righter's Mill Road, Greaves Lane, Monk's Road, and Conshohocken State Road. He planned the sensitive 1932-45 division of the J. Crosby Brown estate and designed and built several houses there as well.

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Non-Mill Related Contributing Structures

One important group of contributing structures is the three similar late nineteenth century stone and concrete single span bridges (8, 47 and 52, Photo 11) found within the boundary increase. Each bridge spans Mill Creek and replaces an earlier bridge washed out by the 1894 flood. These structures help to link the region within the boundary increase as a single landscape. Another contributing structure is the cobble paved ford (27) where Righter's Mill Road traverses Mill Creek.

Contributing Objects

The boundary increase also contains several contributing objects. One is a drive marker/lamp post (76) on the east side of Mill Road just south of Rose Glen Road. The object is designed to look like a European dovecote and is associated with an adjoining stone retaining wall. The twelve foot high construction is a familiar landmark along the road. Another object is a metal and wood sign post marking the corner of Rose Glen and Maple Hill Roads (63c). The sign post is an early twentieth century object that relates to the architecture of nearby houses.

Noncontributing Resources

Since the end of the boundary increase's period of significance, noncontributing housing has been lightly scattered along the slopes of the Mill Creek ravine and in small subdivisions of the large estates. These intrusions are limited to the area above the intersection of Mill Creek Road and Conshohocken State Road and a few small subdivisions in the upland estates. A typical example of an intruding noncontributing building is NC36 on Conshohocken State Road, a large International style residence, c. 1950, cantilevered over the hillside above Mill Creek. The building mixes glass block and stuccoed concrete with exposed field stone in the composition of its exterior walls. Several other "modernist" buildings (Photo 12, erected c. 1950) have been built in the boundary increase but the Colonial Revival is the most prevalent style for those constructed after 1944. Many of the modernist houses, however, use natural materials, mitigating their otherwise intrusive appearance. Resources NC38 and NC39 [Photo 12] are examples of this.

Summary

The most striking attribute of the area encompassed by the Mill Creek Historic District Boundary Increase is the degree to which the eighteenth and nineteenth century rural landscape remains intact. Today, the boundary increase maintains its historic integrity through the retention of eighteenth and nineteenth century mill structures and related buildings and the valley's largely unaltered natural viewshed.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- ☒ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☒ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ B removed from its original location.
- ☐ C a birthplace or a grave.
- ☐ D a cemetery.
- ☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ F a commemorative property.
- ☐ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)	Period of Significance	Significant Dates
INDUSTRY	c. 1758-1946	1894
ARCHITECTURE		
ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC		
	Cultural Affiliation	
	N/A	
Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)	Architect/Builder	
N/A	Durham, Walter K.	
	Gilchrist, Edmund B.	
Narrative Statement of Significance (X See continuation sheets.)		

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Significant Architect/Builder:

Price and McLanahan

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Significance

The Mill Creek National Register Historic District Boundary Increase is historically important in the areas of industry, architecture, and historic archeology for its association with the eighteenth and nineteenth century milling industry and its twentieth century estate and suburban architecture. It is notable for the role its mills and small factories played in the development of the greater Philadelphia region in becoming an international center of industry. The boundary increase contained some of the Philadelphia region's most important mills, known for their paper, guns, and textiles. Architecturally, it is significant for its large body of surviving eighteenth and nineteenth century mill complex resources, its group of large turn-of-the-century estate houses, and for the residential buildings designed and constructed in the nineteen twenties, thirties and forties by the locally prominent and nationally influential architect, Walter K. Durham. For two centuries, Mill Creek was the seat for an industry that played a vital role in the development of Lower Merion Township. Its archeological sites may yield important information about the development of industry and technology in this country, and about the lives of eighteenth and nineteenth century mill workers and owners. Thus, the boundary increase's resources exemplify the industrial, architectural, and socioeconomic changes that occurred here.

The existing Mill Creek National Register Historic District and the boundary increase are located in Lower Merion Township, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. The previously established historic focused on a single mill hamlet, the site of the original Roberts grist mill, that was the first mill built along the creek. The boundary increase enlarges the original district by encompassing the area between the original district and the Schuylkill River. Situated just south and west of Philadelphia, the boundary increase includes the creek, its valley and adjacent lands. Taken together, the districts were once the industrial heart of the township and remain its historic core. The boundary increase goes much further in explaining the township's milling history, as well as its transition into a wealthy suburb in the early twentieth century. There are roughly twelve times the resources in the boundary increase than in the original district. While both the district and the boundary increase contain many mill complex resources, the boundary increase contains proportionately more twentieth century resources.

Industrial History

European settlement of the region began in the last quarter of the seventeenth century. The lands of the Mill Creek valley were part of the Welsh Tract, a parcel of 40,000 acres purchased in 1681 from William Penn by a group of Welsh Quakers.¹ Many of the earliest purchasers of the lands around the creek, both Welsh and otherwise, were primarily interested in the property for investment. They built their own residences and lived in Philadelphia.²

Located so near Philadelphia, the Mill Creek, with its four mile length and its 250 foot drop in elevation, was quickly identified by settlers as a prime location for mills. In 1682, Dr. Edward Jones, the leader of the

¹Gloria O. Becker, "Mill Creek Valley: Architecture, Industry, And Social Change In A Welsh Tract Community, 1682-1800." (Doctoral Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania), 1984, 1-9.

²Becker, "Mill Creek Valley....", 58.

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"Merioneth Adventurers," the first of seven groups of Welshmen to settle on the tract, wrote to a prospective settler that, "there are stones to be had at the falls of the Skoolkill, that is where we are to settle & water enough for mills, but thou must bring Mill stones and ye irons that belong to it, for smiths are dear..."³ Soon after, several Welshmen began milling operations along the creek.

The first miller on the creek was John Roberts. In 1682, Roberts acquired most of the Mill Creek valley lands from first purchasers, Thomas Wynne and John ap John.⁴ He settled on the land, building a home and the township's first grist mill.⁵ The site of this settlement forms the nucleus of the present Mill Creek Historic District. Four successive generations of Roberts owned land and various types of mill enterprises along the creek. The small dynasty reached its zenith under John Roberts III, who at one time owned much of the land along the creek from present day Dove Lake (west of the Mill Creek Historic District) to the creek's mouth at the Schuylkill. The Roberts family held a virtual monopoly on much of the creek until the mid-1700s.

While the Roberts' family had begun its milling enterprise upstream, mills were soon located at the creek's mouth near the Schuylkill River. There operations had the advantage of easy river passage to Philadelphia for people and products. The earliest mill located at the mouth of the creek was a saw mill owned by Thomas Rees, a stone cutter formerly of Roxborough. Rees ran the mill from 1735 to 1741. The original Rees Mill was destroyed in 1805, the result of an attempt at operating it as a powder mill. The site is now below the waters of the Schuylkill River, the river's height having since been raised by the construction of the Flat Rocks dam.⁶

In 1758, a mill was constructed just upstream from the former Rees mill by Christopher Robins, of Whitemarsh, today a contributing site (48). The date of the mill's founding marks the beginning of the boundary increase's period of significance. Today, all that remains are some ruins of the mill buildings and the dam. In 1768, the mill and 170 acres was sold by Robbins' son to Jacob Hagy, also of Whitemarsh. The road to the mill, which had been called "Christopher Robins Mill Road," then became known as Hagys Ford Road. An abandoned part of the road is located in the boundary increase (46b). Hagy was a paper-maker. The success of his mill and the Scheetz mill upstream (in the original district), soon attracted other mills. By 1765 a grist and saw mill located at the present location of the Righter's Ford over Mill Creek (27) was constructed by John Righter. The Bicking Mill (41) followed soon after. In 1795, Jonathon Robeson constructed a paper mill immediately downstream from Righter's mill (30a). Several more followed.

³Dr. Edward Jones to John ap Thomas, 26 6mo. 1682, Mss, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Dr. James Levick Papers.

⁴Becker, "Mill Creek Valley...", 181.

⁵Becker, "Mill Creek Valley...", 187-188.

⁶Charles R. Barker, "Old Mills of Mill Creek, Lower Merion," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* Vol. L., 1926, p. 6.

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Meanwhile, John Roberts III also constructed a paper mill, probably in 1758, where the Walover/Jones Mill (22, the mill, Photo 1) now stands, supporting the beginning of the boundary increase's period of significance. Like all of John Roberts III's property, the mill was confiscated after his execution for treason in 1778. (The Supreme Executive Council convicted Roberts of treason for joining the British army and acting as a guide in September, 1777.) Eventually, this land was sold by George McClenachan to Peter Walover, a Lower Merion paper-maker. Evan Jones purchased the mill through a sheriff's sale, and continued to operate the paper mill until 1848, when it first changed to a cotton and woollen mill, and finally to a grist mill, known as Merion Flour Mills. Like most mills on the creek, it ceased operation after the 1894 flood, and was eventually renovated into apartments under the ownership of James Crosby Brown, in 1924. The mill and its surrounding community of outbuildings and residences is the boundary increase's most intact mill community, providing a standing demonstration of nineteenth century mill community for all who pass by on Creek Road.

The first mills along the creek were usually owned and operated by one man. Other individuals came and paid a fee to have the miller (probably the owner) grind their grain, process their wool, or saw their timber. Many early millers were involved in other businesses, including farming. Mill owners could be residents or absentee and could run the mill themselves or hire managers to run the mills. In addition to employing managers, the mill owners began to hire outside help as business increased. Mill owners could then afford to build second and third mills, because employees made it possible for mill owners to oversee the operation rather than laboring themselves. Mill owners Hagy, Righter and Roberts followed this practice. Slaves and indentured servants also supplied a source of labor for the mills. For example, tax records show that in 1767 John Roberts, miller, had three slaves and one indentured servant. John Righter, another Mill Creek miller, had one slave. Frederick Bicking, still another miller, advertised in newspapers of the period (after 1762 but before his death in 1809) for servants--"German, English, and Negro."⁷

While milling such as paper-making may have required extra skilled workers, it was not until after 1800 when the mills began to change to other manufactures, i.e., lamp wicks, woollen and cotton manufacturing, and later, gun parts, that there was a noticeable increase in the number of workers. Concomitantly, there was an increase in demand for small privately-owned dwellings, as well as tenant housing. The Fairview Mills, under Seth Humphreys, for example, employed 55 hands when it burned in 1884.⁸ The appearance of the mill hands created a new social climate along Mill Creek. This shift from a single-man operation to multiple mill ownership and workers is made evident by the eighteenth and nineteenth century mill workers' and managers' tenant houses located throughout the boundary increase.

The influx of workers changed the nature of the boundary increase from a landscape of scattered mills to that of mill communities. In addition to the mills, owners' houses, and outbuildings, groups of mill workers' housing and other support buildings began appearing along the creek. The Chadwick Mill, originally constructed in 1836 by William Chadwick, contained a company store and post office in addition to workers' housing. Much of this workers' housing was constructed by Robert Chadwick, William's son, after he purchased the mill in

⁷Barker, 16.

⁸Theodore H. Bean, *History of Montgomery County, PA.*, (Philadelphia: Everts & Peck, 1884), p. 29.

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1863.⁹ An Episcopal mission for mill workers was located along the creek near the Bicking Mill (41). The surviving reading room that was associated with the mission (42) is now a private residence. The reading room also served as a de facto township library. Although many millworkers' residences were constructed on the mill owners' property and owned by the mill owner, some of the boundary increase's mill workers' residences were owned by the workers. For example, on Rose Glen Road, a row of houses constructed in the late 1860s to early 1870s (54, 55, 58, 59, no60, 61, 62, 63 and 64) are thought to have been owned by skilled craftsmen of the mills, who were able to purchase their own homes. The existence of these homes make evident the rising skill level associated with milling as the century progressed. Most non-mill needs, however, were centered in the small and prosperous crossroads village of Merion Square, now called Gladwyne (NR 1980). The village contained a general store, post office, tavern, inn, blacksmith, church, and several houses. As the mill worker population grew, so did Gladwyne, located just west of the boundary increase's mill communities.

During the eighteenth century the undeveloped lands between the original Roberts Mill complex and the Schuylkill were gradually filled in with other milling operations. Powder mills, introduced to the creek in the eighteenth century, were one type of mill. After the start of the Revolution, the Committee of Safety for Pennsylvania aided in the establishment of private powder mills to ensure a domestic supply of gunpowder in the face of the then imminent hostilities.¹⁰ The first powder mill was established along the creek in 1776 when George Lush rented a powder mill seat "on a stream call'd Mill Creek, in the possession of John Roberts (the third), about 10 miles from town [Philadelphia]."¹¹ The mill site was located near the mouth of the creek. Powder operations at that location were repeatedly undertaken between 1776 and 1804 but each proved unsuccessful. Frequent explosions proved too costly in both financial resources and human life.¹² (Also see Thomas Rees Mill above.)

Throughout the last half of the eighteenth and part of the nineteenth centuries, Mill Creek valley industry centered largely on the endeavor of paper-making. Paper for the Bill of Rights, it is believed, for Benjamin Franklin's printing business, and some of the young nation's first dollar bills was produced in the boundary increase's mills. Paper manufacture was introduced to Mill Creek by Conrad Scheetz as early as 1750 and soon proved a profitable enterprise.¹³ By the early nineteenth century, the creek's mills produced a substantial percentage of Pennsylvania's paper. There were at least six paper mills in operation within the Mill Creek Historic District. Many of the paper mills were either owned or managed by skilled German craftsmen who immigrated to the valley by way of nearby Germantown or Whitemarsh. One such miller was Frederick

⁹Bean, History of Montgomery County..., p. 29.

¹⁰Barker, 7. and Becker, "Mill Creek Valley..." 292-294.

¹¹Barker, 7.

¹²Barker, 6-8.

¹³Becker, "Mill Creek Valley...", 320.

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Bicking, originally from Winterburg, Germany. After constructing his mill in 1762 (41), Bicking became a successful miller who eventually owned several hundred acres along Mill Creek. In 1776 he became one of the signers of a petition sent to the Committee of Safety for Pennsylvania, pleading that paper-makers be exempted from conscription for the Continental army, for skilled labor was required in the mills.¹⁴ He died in 1809. The influx of German paper makers and their families drastically altered the ethnic make up of the local population which was previously predominately Welsh/English.¹⁵ In 1804, an old resident of the area noted, "[it is] amaising what a number of people that crick does imploy...at the paper mills; their is seven of them in less than three miles...the hills swarm with childern."¹⁶

The American paper making industry declined after 1815 due to the increased availability of European paper goods following the War of 1812. Technological advances in European paper production drove the price of imported paper products far below the level where domestic sources could compete. At the peak of the region's paper industry, about 1815, there were 70 mills in Pennsylvania and Delaware. Within forty miles of Philadelphia, about 950 persons were employed in the production of about \$800,000 worth of paper annually. By 1820, there were less than 17 paper mills operating, employing only about 175 persons. The paper mills of Mill Creek were forced to find other goods to produce.¹⁷

Gun manufacture was one alternative to paper making. Daniel Nippes began manufacturing long guns along the creek in 1814 at what is now the Nippes/Barker Mill (45). Tradition has it that Bicking Paper Mill (41), just up the creek from Nippes/Barker, was re-tooled in the nineteenth century to manufacture the barrels for the famous Derringer pistol. The Bicking Mill was eventually acquired by Henry Derringer, "of the County of Philadelphia, Riflemaker" in 1840. However, both the deed that conveyed the mill tract to Derringer and the deed by which he conveyed it to its next owner listed the operation as a paper mill.¹⁸ Henry Springer is also said to have manufactured pistols and guns at the same mill but is not known to have owned it.¹⁹

As the nineteenth century progressed, textiles also became a major industry on the creek. Paper mills were transformed into carpet yarn, wool, shoddy, cotton, and button mills. The Fairview Mill, constructed in 1825 produced mainly textiles, and at one time had eighteen broad looms for making blankets. At one time, it made

¹⁴Barker, p.16.

¹⁵Becker, "Mill Creek Valley...", 330-350. and Barker, 20.

¹⁶Barker, 21.

¹⁷Barker, p. 21-22.

¹⁸Samuel Lehman Smith to Henry Derringer, May 1, 1840, Montgomery County Deed Book 56, Page 391. and Henry Derringer to William H. Todd. Feb. 28, 1849, Montgomery County Deed Book 74, Page 74.

¹⁹ "Mill Creek Valley Part VI, Hum of Industry Now Hushed," *The Main Line Chronicle*, Clippings File, Gladwyne Public Library. N.D.

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1,850 pounds of blanket cloth and 900 pounds a day of woolen yard.²⁰ Egbert Mill, constructed in the 1840s, manufactured lamp wick. (Some of the buildings of the Egbert Mill complex [53, 53a-f] eventually became part of the Gladwine Colony in 1931, a sanatorium run by Dr. Seymour Dewitt Ludlum of Philadelphia. At the time, the area's peaceful setting was thought to be an ideal setting for treatment of emotional disorders. The colony closed in 1959.)

The introduction and technological advancements of steam powered factory machinery made it possible to locate larger and more efficient mills directly in Philadelphia, taking advantage of a large and inexpensive labor supply and transportation network. Eventually, steam made water power obsolete. Some mills did use steam power in addition to water power to turn their turbines towards the end of the nineteenth century, but they remained small scale operations in comparison to the large mills in Philadelphia. Other mills, like the Barker Mill, relied on advanced turbine technology. For example, in 1890, a steel turbine run on a horizontal shaft replaced the Barker Mill's overshot wheel. The turbine was constructed by the S. Morgan Smith Company. According to company catalogs, the turbine was 44.3 horse power at 263 RPMs.²¹ Aside from the Barker Mill, property along Mill Creek became much less desirable as industrial real estate. Most of the mills that survived into the late nineteenth century were finally closed after the devastating flood of 1894, which destroyed or damaged several mill dams and buildings.²² The last active mill, the Barker Wool and Yarn Mill, located in the old Nippes Mill complex (45, 45a), operated into the mid-twentieth century using a water turbine system. These same buildings remain in use today as light industrial and office space continuing a three hundred year tradition of manufacturing along the creek.²³

Mill Architecture

The Mill Creek Historic District Boundary Increase contains significant architecture from three periods of its development, as described below. The most significant number of contributing resources stem from the milling industry, and, taken together, provide the most visually significant collection of resources in the boundary increase. The scale, setting, and materials of the vernacular architectural traditions of the mill buildings constructed there in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had a profound effect on twentieth century architecture in the boundary increase and to a large extent, throughout Philadelphia's Main Line.

Within the Mill Creek Valley, a local vernacular architectural tradition was adapted to the utilitarian demands of mill buildings, mill worker's tenements, and outbuildings. Their stone construction and simple utilitarian lines

²⁰History of Montgomery County, p. 29.

²¹Grant H. Voaden, "An Old Mill Yarn." *Turbine Topics* (S. Morgan Smith Co. newsletter), 5 (October 1947): 3.

²²Phyllis Maier, *Montgomery County: The Second Hundred Years*. (Norristown, PA: Montgomery County Federation of Historical Societies, 1983), 317.

²³Becker, "Gladwyne Historic Preservation Survey" 6.

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are typical of rural Pennsylvania industrial buildings built in the area during the boundary increase's period of significance. Many examples survive, making the creek worthy of its name and preserving the eighteenth and nineteenth century milling heritage along the creek. This body of eighteenth and nineteenth century resources can also be found along the banks of the creek and its tributaries. Few noncontributing resources adversely effect the boundary increase's integrity. Among the remaining resources that reflect the boundary increase's industrial heritage are the four remaining mill buildings: the Walover/Jones Mill (22), the Nippes/Barker Mill (45), the Robeson Saw Mill (6) and the Egbert Mill (53). These mills formed the center of their own communities. The Walover/Jones Mill site remains nearly intact, complete with the mill owner's house (19), the mill workers' tenements (16, 23, 24, 25), the mill (22), and the stable (21). Remnants of the earthen work mill race and dam (22a), and a large iron pipe that once carried the race beneath Mill Creek Road, also survive.

Most numerous along the creek, however, are the surviving examples of mill workers' housing. These include the row of ten mill workers' cottages along the west side of Rose Glen Road (54, 55, 58, 59, nc60, 61, 62, 63 and 64); the small duplex located at the Chadwick Mill site near the intersection of the abandoned track of Hagy's Ford Road and Mill Creek Road (46); the much larger Egbert Mill workers' tenement (53a); and the two twin fieldstone duplex mill worker's houses on the west side of Old Gulph Road just south of its intersection with Mill Creek Road (9 and 12). These buildings provide a vital contextual link between the boundary increase's mill buildings and people who worked in them.

Estate Architecture

The closing years of the nineteenth century were a period of great change in the way the land was used in Lower Merion and throughout the boundary increase. Land once belonging to the mill owners became the country estates of some of Philadelphia's most wealthy, powerful, and socially prominent families. Estate development in the boundary increase was bolstered by the close locations of Rose Glen Station (demolished) near the railroad tracks just west of the mouth of the creek. The station accessed a Reading Railroad line that provided easy access to Philadelphia for the residents of Gladwyne and the lower Mill Creek valley.²⁴ The boundary increase's estates contribute to the significance of the boundary increase for their architectural merit and for their contribution to the retention of the boundary increase's mill complex resources and the open space.

The estates contain some of the Main Line's most impressive residential architecture, designed by some of the leading architects of their time. Also, the estates were critical to the preservation of the historic character of the Mill Creek valley. Although the estates did change the appearance of the landscape on the highlands surrounding the valley, they did little to disrupt the appearance of the mills or mill workers' housing. In fact, one estate owner, J. Crosby Brown, housed his servants in old mill buildings located on his property. Other estate owners, such as Walter C. Pew, allowed mill buildings, mill ruins, and open space surrounding the resources to remain relatively unaltered, mainly by not allowing the property to be subdivided. Pew, an heir of the Sun Company founder, owned a 103 acre estate in the center of the boundary increase called Rolling

²⁴Stephanie Hetos Cocke, "The Gilded Age Estates of Lower Merion Township, Pennsylvania: A History and Preservation Plan". (Master's Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1987), 14-15.

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Hills. The property is mainly open space. It has just one building, a small caretaker's house (56), and several ruins, including the Bicking Mill site. The open space contributes to the boundary increase's rural character.

"Clyfton Wynyates" is one of the boundary increase's most grand estates. Its immense main house, first known as "Dipple" (26 and 26a), was constructed in 1903 for William C. Scott and designed by the noted Philadelphia architectural firm of Price and McLanahan. Like many large houses constructed on the Main Line at this time, it was designed in a Tudor Revival style, simply termed "English" by period architects. It was purchased in 1914 by J. Crosby Brown. Brown was a member of the Brown Brothers, an international financial firm based in Liverpool, New York, and Philadelphia. The house was renamed Clyfton Wynyates by Brown and became the centerpiece of the 192 acre estate he built around it.²⁵ The estate included a carriage house and ballroom, mill house, two barns, stables, a green house, a garage, and many smaller outbuildings. Brown had also purchased the Walover/Jones and Righter mill hamlets in which he housed the servants who staffed his estate. Although the estate was eventually subdivided, a large number of resources remain intact, including the Walover/Jones mill complex. The subdivision, planned by architect Walter Durham (see below), visibly preserved the major components of the estate, and allowed for a limited number of houses without disrupting the natural wooded setting along Mill Creek.

Equally worthy of mention is the large "Chateausque" style country house (73) built for Rodman E. Griscom in 1929. Rodman E. Griscom was the son of Clement A. Griscom (1841-1912), a wealthy ship builder and president of the International Navigation Company, a steamship concern. Clement purchased a 90 acre parcel of land known as the Soapstone Farm. After his father's death, Rodman expanded this parcel with land once part of the Hagy mill tract and constructed a house on it. He named the house Dolboran after his father's old house in nearby Wynnewood. The estate, surrounded by an orchard and many acres of forest, is located on the highlands to the north of the creek not far from its mouth. The Griscom house and complex was an intentionally impressive architectural conception designed by the Philadelphia architect Edmund B. Gilchrist. Gilchrist was known for his Colonial Revival and French Eclectic style architecture. The house was later purchased by John T. Dorrance, Jr. Dorrance (1873-1930) was the son of the owner of the Campbell Soup Company and served as Campbell's chief executive and chairman of the board from 1915-1930. Like very few other estate properties on the Main Line, the estate not only retains its architectural integrity but the open land and rural character integral to its original conception.

Twentieth Century Houses

Another major force in the evolution of the present day character of the boundary increase was architect Walter K. Durham (1896-1978). Durham was not only responsible for the design of most of the houses constructed in the boundary increase since 1933, but also for the remodeling of many older buildings. A nationally known architect who worked primarily in the Delaware Valley and largely along the Main Line, Durham's clients were usually wealthy individuals who wanted well-built homes carefully sited in scenic, natural settings. Durham often relied on the Mill Creek valley's domestic vernacular building tradition as a primary source for his designs. Indigenous characteristics were used or altered to create buildings well suited

²⁵ Jean Kessler Wolf, "The Residential Architecture of Walter K. Durham in Lower Merion Township, 1925-1968: Topological Analysis and Conservation Guidelines" (Masters Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1993), p. 340.

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to its historic rural environment while still catering to the needs of his affluent twentieth century clients. Durham's promotion of the three hundred year old Welsh/Quaker building patterns helped to again make it a preferred style of architecture throughout the Main Line in the years before and just after World War II.²⁶ The Durham-designed buildings within the Mill Creek Historic District Boundary Increase represent the largest cluster of his residential architecture in its proper setting. Thanks largely to Durham's concern for the continuance of natural and historic fabric, much of the region's present day rural character has been preserved.

One of the areas where Durham's work can best be seen is along Maple Hill Road. Here, Durham designed and built five extremely large and elegant houses built between 1935 and 1962, including his own house (68). His most impressive house is the William Coulter Elliott house (1936, #71). It is a large Georgian Revival building overlooking the Mill Creek valley.

Archeology

The boundary increase also has numerous resources of archeological significance. There are at least seven mill hamlets and related sites now surviving as clusters of foundations, standing ruins, and single foundations. One mill site, the Hagy paper mill (48), was the subject of an archeological excavation in 1975-76. As excavated by a team from the University of Pennsylvania, the mill building was found to have been somewhat larger than the 1798 direct tax dimensions (30' x 5[?]) had suggested. It probably had been enlarged in the nineteenth century. Also uncovered was evidence of another building, possibly the 18' x 20' grist mill also listed on the property by the direct tax.²⁷ Many of these former eighteenth and nineteenth century mill sites, both those now in ruin and those substantively intact, may yield important archeological information about the development of industry and technology in this country and the life of the mill workers and families.

Comparison, Preservation, Threats

At its height in the early nineteenth century, the Mill Creek Historic District Boundary Increase was a major industrial center in the Philadelphia region, being one of several which helped propel Philadelphia to national and international industrial and financial stature. Although many of the Schuylkill's larger tributaries became mill streams, only Philadelphia's Wissahickon Creek rivaled Mill Creek in the extent of its milling operations. While the Wissahickon probably surpassed Mill Creek in the density and size of its mills, none survive. Today, the Wissahickon little resembles the mill stream it once was. Another valley known for its mills is the Brandywine valley in Chester County, Pennsylvania. While several eighteenth and nineteenth mills survive, including the Hagley, Brinton, and Hoffman mills, they are spread along a 40 mile creek corridor that is interrupted by several large communities and subdivisions, major highways, and vast distances between mills. These areas lack Mill Creek's historic and visual continuity and its still rural character. The same can be said for nearby Chester and Darby Creeks, which also supported many mills. With its numerous surviving mill buildings and relatively undisturbed landscape, the boundary increase, together with the original Mill Creek

²⁶Wolf, 17.

²⁷Becker, "Mill Creek Valley...", 324.

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Historic District, retain tangible and physical links with its industrial past. It remains the best preserved mill stream along the southern Schuylkill River and one of the best in southeastern Pennsylvania.

Besides the presence of estates and Durham's influence on the boundary increase, several other factors have contributed to the continued preservation of the boundary increase's historic fabric and natural landscape. Approximately 75 percent of the property owners whose properties border the creek signed the Mill Creek Conservancy Agreement of 1941. This covenant prohibits tree cutting and the erection or demolition of buildings within 100 feet on either side of the creek bed, where many mill buildings were located. The township has long recognized the Mill Creek valley as an important historical asset, and one of the largest reserves of open space remaining in the municipality. The proposed boundary increase includes lands within three township parks, expressly acquired for preservation purposes. The most recent acquisition was the 103 acre Walter Pew property in 1995, which includes the Bicking mill ruins and elements of the Nippes mill. The township also recently enacted a cluster zoning ordinance for developments of over five acres and has a historic preservation ordinance. These measures, along with the presence of large estates held privately, have not only helped preserve the boundary increase's historic resources, but its natural setting as well.

Threats to the boundary increase include high land values making the remaining parcels ripe for development, and the boundary increase's close proximity to Philadelphia, Route 76, also called the Schuylkill Expressway, and the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority's (SEPTA) R5 commuter rail line, also known as the Paoli Local. Standing ruins continue to show signs of deterioration and erosion along the creek threaten archeological resources.

Summary

In summary, the Mill Creek Historic District Boundary Increase is Lower Merion Township's historic, architectural and archaeologic core. It contains a landscape that has a rural historic characteristic yet is surrounded by suburban Philadelphia. Most significant is the large number of contributing resources which survive within its boundary, particularly intact eighteenth and nineteenth century mill resources, large estate properties designed for notable individuals by prominent architects, and single houses designed by architect Walter K. Durham. Few noncontributing resources disrupt this historic landscape, much of which has been preserved as open space. Thus, the Mill Creek Historic District Boundary Increase, existing alone or together with the original historic district, is a visual record of the township's industrial and socioeconomic past.

9. Major Bibliographical References

X See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Primary Location of Additional Data

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
 - ☐ Other State agency
 - ☐ Federal agency
 - ☐ Local government
 - ☐ University
 - X Other
- Name of repository: Gladwyne Library,

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Approximately 550

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone	Easting	Northing
1 18	477020	4433630
2 18	475325	4429650

Zone	Easting	Northing
3 18	476280	4429295
4 18	478560	4432450

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

X See continuation sheet.

Boundary Justification

X See continuation sheet.

11. Form Prepared By

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Boundary Description

Beginning at the north corner of block/unit 8 G 9 which is the place where the Schuylkill Expressway crosses Soapstone Road; thence south east along the boundary of block/unit 8 G 9 approximately 1650 feet to a point; thence west approximately 900 feet following Old Monk Road and Monk Road to a point on Monk Road at the intersection of block/units 8 G 9, 8 G 7, and 8 G 32; thence south east along the boundary of block/unit 8 G 7 approximately 1440 feet to the point of a change in direction of that boundary;

Thence north 60 degrees east approximately 2300 feet to the Montgomery County line in the Schuylkill River; thence south east along the County line 1200 feet; thence south 60 degrees west approximately 2000 feet to the north corner of block/unit 8 G 54; thence south west along block/units 8 G 54, 8 G 55, and 8 G 52 approximately 2100 feet to the west corner of block/unit 8 G 52; thence south east along a boundary of block/unit 8 G 52 approximately 2100 feet to a corner of block/unit 8 G 15; thence south east approx. 410' along a boundary of block/unit 8 G 15; thence south west approx. 900 feet along the southern most boundary of block/unit 8 G 15 to the northern most point of block/unit 7 F 24. Thence south south east 200 feet to another corner of the same block/unit; thence south south west along the western boundaries of block/units 7 G 1, 7 F 71, 70 and 69 approximately 1166 feet to a point on the eastern most boundary of block/unit 7 F 24. Thence approx. 350' across block/unit 7 F 24 to a point on the western side of Conshohocken State Road. Thence along Conshohocken State Road and the boundary of block/units 7 F 18, 17, 16, 15, 10 and 9 approximately 2800 feet to the point where Conshohocken State Road turns west and crosses the Mill Creek.

Thence along Mill Creek Road and block/units 7 F 2, 7 F 7, 7 F 5, 7 E 24, 7 E 31, 7 E 31, and 7 E 32 approximately 1800 feet to the north corner of block/unit 7 E 37; thence along the west boundary of block/unit 7 E 32 approximately 290 feet to a corner of block/unit 7 E 36; thence along the west boundary of block/unit 7 E 36 approximately 600 feet in two courses to a corner and a point on the north boundary of block/unit 7 E 44; thence east along that north boundary of block/unit 7 E 44 approximately 115 feet to a corner of block/unit 7 E 44. Thence west approximately 74 feet to the western most point of lot 7 E 35. Thence south along south west boundary of 7 E 35 for approximately 85 feet to a point of lot 7 E 44. Thence turning west again and continuing along southern most boundary of lot 7 E 44 approximately 420 feet. Thence continue along the south boundary of block/units 7 E 45 and 46 approximately 900 feet to a corner of block/unit 7 E 46 and Old Gulph Road.

Thence west along north boundary of Old Gulph Road approximately 40 feet to a point. Thence south across Old Gulph Road to the north corner of block/unit 6 D 16; thence south west along block/unit 6 D 16 approximately 305 feet to a point. Thence south east along the boundary of block/unit 6 D 54 500 feet to the south east corner of block/unit 6 D 54. Thence south west 270 along the line separating block/unit 6 D 54 to north from block/unit 6 D 66 to the south to another corner of 6 D 54. Thence continuing to along a line which is the southern border of block/units 6 D 54, 7 D 35, 7 D 36 and part of 7 D 10 for 1,150 feet to a point on the eastern border of block/unit 7 D 10. Thence south along eastern border of block/unit 7 D 10 for approximately 245 feet to the southern most point of 7 D 10. Next follow four courses of the boundary of block/unit 7 D 10 in a northward direction approximately 450 feet to a point on the boundary of block/unit 7 D 7. Thence west along the boundary of block/unit 7 D 7 and 7 D 99 approximately 550 feet to Mill Creek Road.

Thence north along the Mill Creek Road and the boundary of block/unit 7 D 99 approximately 500 feet to a point; thence north approximately 55 degrees east following the boundary of the existing Mill Creek Historic District, approximately 500 feet, crossing Old Gulph Road to the west corner of block/unit 7 D 38;

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National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
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Mill Creek Historic District Boundary Increase
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Montgomery County, Pennsylvania
county and state

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Thence along the boundary of block/unit 7 D 38 approximately 300 feet to the north corner of the block/unit; thence following 2 courses generally south east along the boundary of block/unit 7 D 38 a distance of approximately 280 feet to the point it intersects with northern boundary of block/unit 7 D 8. Thence east along 7 D 8 boundary approximately 360 feet for four courses in a generally east direction to the north western most point of lot 7 D 20. Thence east along the northern most boundary of 7 D 20 for 185 feet to its intersection with western boundary of lot 7 D 4. Thence around four courses: generally east, north, east, south of lot 7 D 4 for 476 feet to a point of on south west boundary of lot 7 D 32. Thence east north east along the northern boundary of block/unit 7 D 32 and 7 D 33 approximately 430 feet to intersection with south west boundary 7 E 51. Thence north west along that boundary for approximately 100 feet to west most point of lot 7 E 51. Thence along the northern boundaries of block/units 7 E 51 and 52 in three courses approximately 620 feet to Mill Creek Road.

Thence in a northern direction follow Mill Creek Road and then Crosby Brown Road along the boundary lines of block/units 7 E 10, 7 E 11, 7 E 12, 7 E 55, and 7 E 56 to the west boundary of block/unit 7 E 16 in a northerly direction for approximately 1,615 feet. Thence follow boundary of 7 E 16 in six courses approximately 1,200 feet and across Righters Mill Road.

Thence follow Righters Mill Road in a north west direction along the boundaries of block/units 7 E 23 and 7 E 22, 8 E 23 approximately 1100 feet to Greaves Lane. Thence east north east along Greaves Lane and block/units 8 E 23, and 8 E 53 approximately 700 feet to Conshohocken State Road. Thence crossing that road and continuing in the same direction approximately 530 feet along the northern boundary of block/unit 8 F 35 and part of 8 F 9 to a corner of block/unit 8 F 7. Thence north west along block/units 8 F 7 and 8 F 8 approximately 700 feet to the north corner of block/unit 8 F 8; thence approximately north 50 degrees west approximately 450 feet to the south east corner of block/unit 8 F 30; thence north north west along the boundary of block/units 8 F 17 and 8 F 18 approximately 600 feet to the west corner of block/unit 8 F 18. Thence north east along the northern most boundary of lot 8 F 18 for approximately 445 feet to Maple Hill Road.

Thence north west along south west border of Maple Hill Road and block/units 8 F 2, 9 F 125, 9 F 124, 9 F 123, 9 F 122, and 9 F 15 approximately 850 feet to the east corner of block/unit 9 F 19; thence west along the south boundary of 9 F 19 approximately 125 feet to western most point of 9 F 19; thence north approximately 140 feet along western boundary of block/unit 9 F 19 to Rose Glen Road.

Thence eastward along Rose Glen Road on the boundary of block/units 9 F 19, 9 F 2, 9 F 1, 9 F 3, 9 F 4, 9 F 18, 9 F 6, 9 F 5, 9 F 9, 9 F 113, 9 F 8, 9 F 17, 9 F 16, 8 F 6 for approximately 3,000 feet to a point on the northern most point of block/unit 8 G 1.

Thence north north west across Rose Glen Road along the lines separating lots 8 G 59, 8 G 60, 8 G 56 to the west from 8 G 12 and 8 G 10 to the east approximately 1400 feet to Monk Road and the north west corner of block/unit 8 G 10. Thence east approximately 80 feet along the north west boundary of block/unit 8 G 10 and south side of Monk Road. Thence across Monk Road and north along line separating block/unit 8 G 23 to the west from 8 G 14 to the east for approximately 630 feet to Soapstone Road. Thence north east along Soapstone Road and on the boundary of block/units 8 G 14, 8 F 58, 8 G 8, and 8 G 9 approximately 2000 feet to the place of the beginning.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Mill Creek Historic District Boundary Increase
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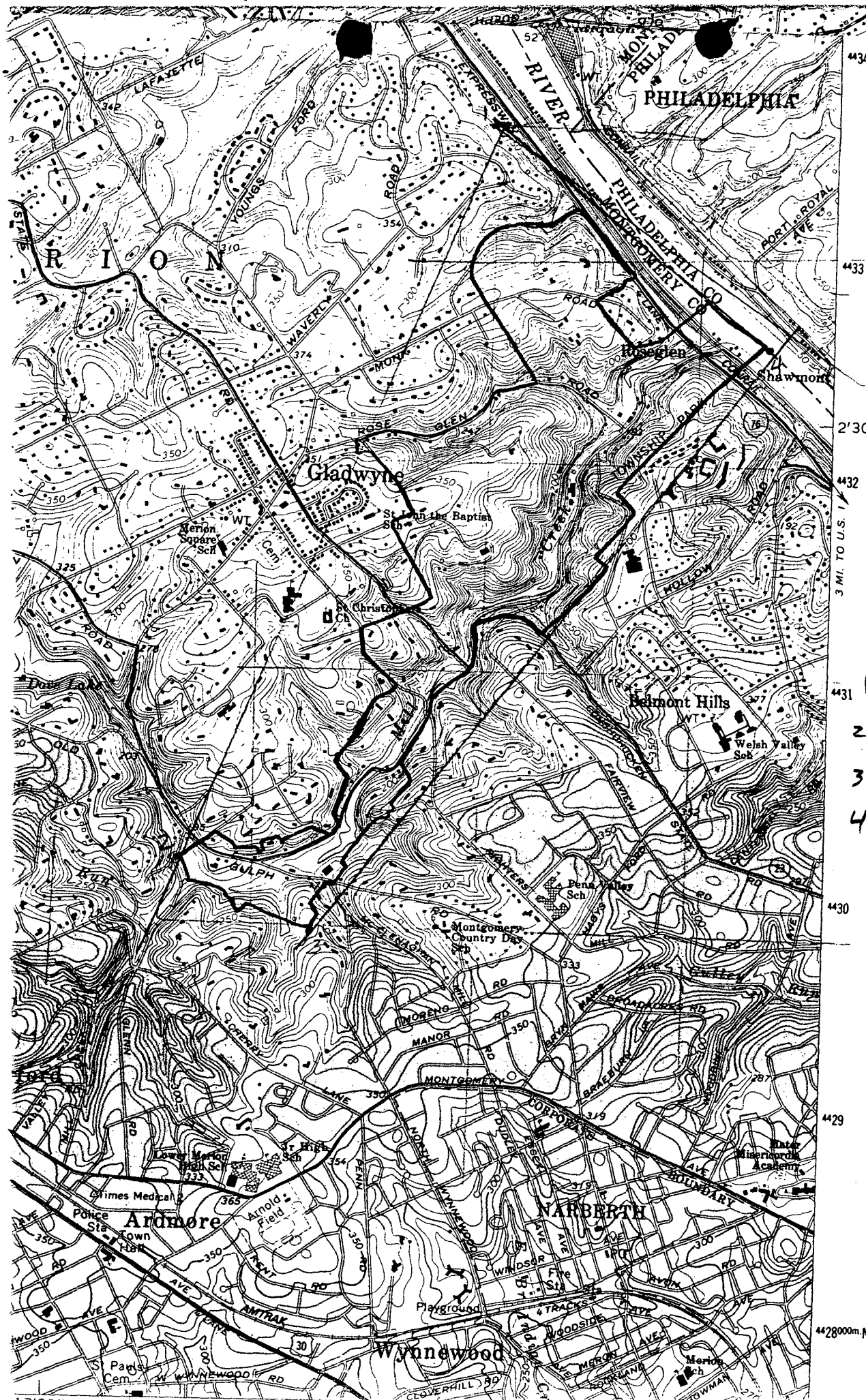
Boundary Justification

The boundary contains properties contributing to the historical, architectural, and archeological significance of Lower Merion Township's Mill Creek valley, by enlarging the current Mill Creek Historic District, and essentially, following the Mill Creek from that district north to the Schuylkill River. Most of the land and resources within the enlarged district reflect the district's history as a center of the milling industry and its gradual change to private estates, which allowed much of the district to retain its rural character.

At the southern end it connects onto the northern end of the existing Mill Creek Historic District, where contributing resources of various ages are located. These buildings, and others in the district, constitute the district's change from a rural industrial setting to an upper income commuter suburb. The eastern border of the boundary essentially parallels Mill Creek to the east of Mill Creek Road. Along this border are mill sites, residences, some noncontributing, ruins, and wooded areas, all, for the most part, contributing to the rural historic character of the district. It is along the creek that the most milling activity in the district took place, and the majority of the mill related resources remain. It is also the area which has been preserved largely through deed restrictions, and public ownership of land. The north boundary is the Schuylkill River at the mouth of Mill Creek. This area includes ruins, some submerged, of a former milling community. The western most border begins with Soapstone Road, just west of Monk Road, which includes the Cedar Crest estate. This estate, along with the Rodman E. Griscom estate on the east side of Monk Road, is indicative of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century estate settlements which occurred in the district, and helped to maintain its rural character. (Cedar Crest, the older of the two, was also owned by mill owners.) The district also includes mill housing and other mill sites along Rose Glen Road, which forms part of the central part of the western boundary. The area east of Rose Glen Road also includes the former Walter Pew estate, which stretches across the district to the eastern border, and contains numerous mill ruins, and houses designed by noted Philadelphia architect Walter K. Durham. The western border also includes the main houses of the Crosby Brown Estate, also called Clyfton Wynyates, which are on the Township's historical survey. Just north of the estate, the boundary once again meets the northern border of the existing Mill Creek Historic District.

The Boundary Increase excludes groupings of resources that do not contribute to the district's historical or architectural significance. Along the east boundary, it excludes recently developed areas of houses and apartment buildings on the tops of hills surrounding the Mill Creek valley. The boundary runs through the Lower Merion owned park land south of the Schuylkill because visually and historically, there is little connection to the district as one moves further from Mill Creek on its east side. The north border excludes a modern development on the northern cul-de-sac extension of Monks Road. The western boundary excludes new housing developments west of Soapstone Road, south of the former John T. Dorrance Jr. property, west of Rose Glen Road, and south of property developed by Walter Durham. The resources in these lands are primarily noncontributing, and their roads, built solely to support residential housing, differ from the historic roads, which follow the landscape, of the district. The district also excludes noncontributing structures and a Jewish cemetery south of the district and east of Vaughans Road.

The boundary increase was not connected to the nearby Merion Square Historic District because of the in-fill of noncontributing residential development (mentioned above) between that district and Mill Creek.



MAP 1.
 U.S.G.S. Map.
 Norristown Quad.
 1983
 Mill Creek Historic
 DISTRICT
 (Boundary
 Increase)
 Lower Merion Twp.
 Montgomery Co.
 Pennsylvania.

UTM
 ZONE 18
 1 477020 4433630
 2 475655 4430050
 3 476280 4429295
 4 478560 4432450

4428000m N.